WHIRRAKEE

October 2007 Vol. 28 No. 9

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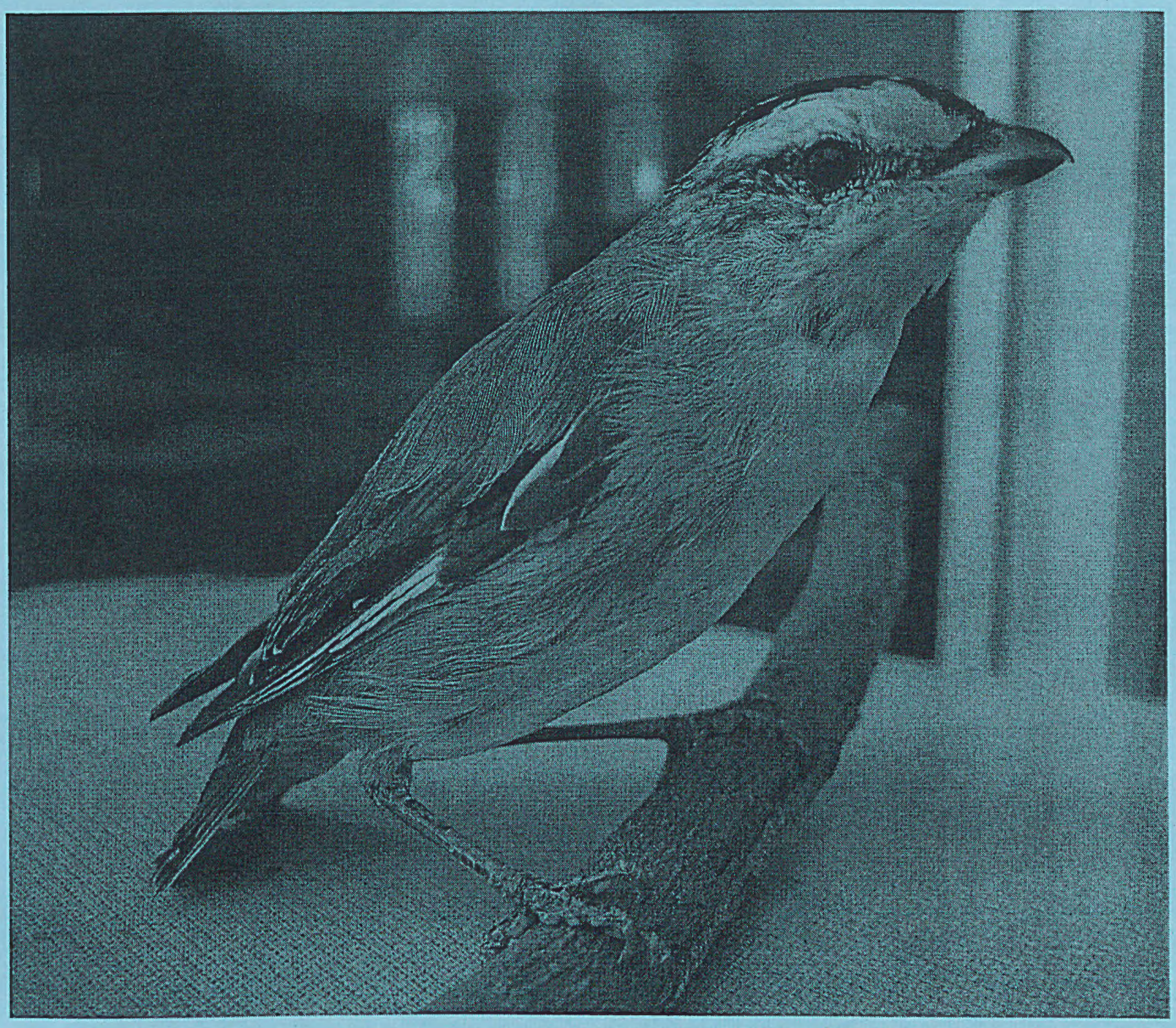

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
Address for correspondence: PO Box 396, Bendigo 3552
ISSN 0812-423X

Office Bearers for 2007 - 2008

President	Glenise Moors	Mandurang South Road, Sedgwick	54396254
Senior Vice President	Richard Goonan		0423 418815
Junior Vice President	Matthew Comer		0409 162627
Secretary	Anne Bridley		5449 3479
Minute Secretary	Peter Ellis and Jan Orr		
Treasurer	Stuart Fraser	12 Bambara Close, Bendigo	
Membership Officer (t.b.c.)	Kate Lottkowitz	80 Piccaninny Rd, RSD Strathfieldsaye	5439 3157
Excursion organiser	Richard Goonan		0423 418815
Syllabus organiser	Rod Orr	2 Cockerel Court, Bendigo	5443 5668
	(an assistant's position for the syllabus organiser is still vacant)		
Librarian (t.b.c.)	Diana Collier	31 Milroy Street, Bendigo	5443 0137
Garden Convenor/Secretary	Matthew Comer		0409 162 627
Hall Management	Maurie Lewis (assisted by Bill Holsworth and Kath Thompson)		0407 427179
Whirrakee contact	Sabine Wilkens	82 Somerville Street, Bendigo e-mail: s.wilkens@latrobe.edu.au	5443 2797

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The invited speaker at general meetings starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper.
If a workshop is held prior to the meeting, it will be advertised and it usually starts at 7.00pm.
The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Bob Ruddick, Rod Orr, Jan Orr, Peter Ellis, Ben Goonan, Anthony Sheean, Rob Moors

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. In addition to local excursions, campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has one active group that meets regularly (the Fauna Study Group) and other groups that meet at irregular intervals.

Fauna Study Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.
Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Bird Observers Group: This group has field excursions and the occasional lecture evening. Please consult the *Whirrakee* for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5449 3479.
To propose meetings or excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

Front cover photo?...see page 2.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club

Vol. 28, No. 9, October 2007

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note
A very big thank you to all office bearers and committee members (new and old) who have accepted nominations for the next club year. Everybody is terribly busy, and yet, we have nearly a complete set of positions to run the club another year. More volunteers are welcome, of course. If you want to get involved, simply contact a committee member, or perhaps turn up to the next garden working bee?
In this edition, we again have interesting articles reproduced from other sources, however, original articles from members are always preferred. Many thanks to the contributors of these, I hope we'll get a few more in the future.

Front Page Illustration – Photographer: Karen Thomas
This absolutely superb picture of a Striated Pardalote (you should see it in colour!) was taken at Sheepwash Creek Mandurang, in July this year. These birds had nested last year in Karen's neighbours' nesting box. What about this year?

Excursions and Short Notices

October Excursion

The October (13th) excursion will go to Mandurang, where we will be checking nest boxes and looking for *Boronia anemonifolia, Hybanthus floribundus* and *Philotheca pubescens*

Transport will be by by carpool

Meet at Spring Gully general store/oval carpark at 8am. Return time is approximately 3pm.

For any excursion enquiries, ring Richard Goonan on 0423418815 or e-mail him on richardgoonan@optusnet.com.au

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Cheque without a name...

Someone has sent a bank cheque paying for their 2008 membership but has neglected to provide their name and address. If that might be you, please get in touch with Stuart Fraser our treasurer.

Pomonal native flower show

This will be on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th October at the Pomonal Hall and is presented by the Australian Plants Society Grampians group 25th anniversary spectacular, "the best display of Australian flowers you will ever see!". Admission $3 children free. 9.30am to 5pm. Plants, books and cut flowers for sale and refreshments available.

Also at Halls Gap, **Grampians Wildflower and Arts Show**, Friday 5th to Tuesday 9th October.

Bus trip to Cranbourne Native Botanic Gardens – Sunday 21st October

The Bendigo Native Plant Group is organising a bus on this day to the beautiful new native Botanic Garden at Cranbourne.The cost will be $ 25.- for the bus. Please contact Ian O'Halloran if you are interested in attending (ph 54742587

Report on the club garden

by Matthew Comer

A working bee was held on Sat 8th of September and attended by 7 people. We carried out weeding, and tidying and spread mulch in some areas. We also planted around 70 plants. The plants and the mulch were provided with the support of the City of Greater Bendigo through Anthony Sheean, who also provided wheelbarrows to cart the mulch. When the plants were ordered the season seemed more promising than it subsequently has turned out. This meant that the plantings were re-assessed. We concentrated most of the plants in two smaller open areas which were well dug over and prepared to give the plants a better chance of survival. This is as opposed to scattering the plants further through the existing plantings where they would be subject to heavy root competition from the established plants. Most of the species added this year are small shrubs or herbs with showy flowers, to brighten up certain prominent areas such as the entrance area. We have been working on this strategy for the last couple of years. The work of the small band of dedicated weeders and others is much appreciated. At the end of the morning there was still a little less than half of the mulch still to be spread, plus there are still some quite weedy areas, in other words there is still work to be done, and in particular the weeds really need to be removed soon before they set seed. **The next morning of work will be on the first Saturday in October (6th) at 9am**, followed by the first Saturday in November, which will be the 3rd.

I hope that all this talk of work doesn't put anyone off! It really is quite a pleasant way to spend a morning.

Bush Month October

Trust for Nature has announced the wonderful program for this year's Bush Month

To download your own program go to www.tfn.org.au

or phone (03) 96709933

Goldfields Superpipe Ballarat Link, September update

by Toni Meek

This is a short message to give you an update on the construction work in the National Park. We have now completed the installation of the pipeline through this section and were pleased that we were able to use only about half of the easement area we had identified we might need for construction. Reinstatement works have not yet commenced. This work is likely to be undertaken once the work in Sandhurst Reservoir is complete.

I'm also pleased to advise we received some positive feedback from Alison Oppermann of the Department of Sustainability and Environment to say that DSE and Parks Victoria were happy with the work that had been undertaken in the National Park.

If you have any other questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Toni Meek can be contacted on 8517 9343 or at toni.meek@earthtech.com.au

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More about echidnas in spring…

Following the front cover photograph by Mark Toohey and Adrian Doye and description of the unusual echidna group behaviour in the September Whirrakee (as well as the article in the Bendigo Weekly 24/8), the following article by Clive Fisher was published in the Bendigo Weekly on Friday September 7:

'….Echidnas are solitary until a female has an egg which needs to be fertilised. Then a group of males will gather and follow her, waiting for a chance to mate with her. Perhaps this is what was occurring in this instance.

The men were very lucky to see the group. I have seen many lone echidnas during my long life but never a group.

However, I have witnessed similar behaviour form a lone echidna.

In September 2000, I stopped my car on the highway west of Dimboola to check out a road kill, when I saw an echidna coming up the road bank towards me. I stood still, and it continued up and stood between my feet.

It then looked up at me, then touched my right boot with its beak. It then thrust its beak forcibly at my left boot, then turned around and walked back down the embankment.

Its behaviour astonished me, as the behaviour of the four obviously astonished Mark Toohey and Adrian Doye.

…and

As a further addendum to the echidna story, my sister Jean tells me that several people saw a group of four echidnas in the red gum forest just upstream of the town of Deniliquin on the Edward River. August-September must be breeding season for them. They must be more aggressive at this time of year, too. It was September 2000 that the echidna interacted with me on the highway west of Dimboola.

Bibron's Toadlet populations at One Tree Hill

And more interesting news from the Bendigo Weekly…

In the September 21 edition, on page 26 was an article announcing that the NCCMA's (North Central Catchment Management Authority) Water Watch team (coordinated by Leigh Mitchell) had discovered several populations of Bibron's Toadlet, a threatened frog species, in and around the Greater Bendigo National Park. The community frog watching effort had turned up the toadlet, which is listed as a threatened species in Victoria.

The article goes on to say that Parks Victoria will make an effort to exclude integral habitat zones from any proposed fuel reduction burn.

Bibron's Toadlet was pictured on the front cover of the April *Whirrakee*, after Leigh Mitchell, had given a most spirited talk to the club about our local frogs

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Statement of receipts and Expenditure for the Year Ended 31st July 2007

General Account – Investment Account

Receipts		
M/ship		2930.50
Subscriptions		34.00
Donations		299.00
Interest		306.29
Leaf Litter Book		846.00
Books Tzsarus		270.25
B/Ironbark CD		800.00
Hall Chairs		270.00
Excursions		373.00
Miscellaneous		
Glasses	30.00	
Cheque Return	150.00	180.00
		6307.04

Expenditure		
Whirrakee Printing		1470.11
Whirrakee Post		600.98
Membership of Groups		142.00
Hall		158.00
Leaf Litter Book		756.92
CSIRO Publishing		379.93
Costs General		403.25
Excursions		487.18
Miscellaneous		
G/Square PS	50.00	
Audit	220.00	
Speaker Exp.	100.00	
Caterworx	179.96	
Post Office Box	65.00	
Consumer Affairs	36.70	
Office Works	24.78	
Sandhurst Nursery	105.00	781.44
		5179.81
Surplus		1129.23
		6307.04

Bank statement at 1st August 2006	
Cheque A/c	3546.54
Term Deposit	10072.95
Surplus	1129.23
	14748.72

Bank Statement at 31st July 2007	
Cheque A/c	4675.77
Term Deposit	10072.95
	14748.72

I have examined the documents and the records supporting the above statements of receipts and expenditure and I am able to report that in my opinion the receipts and expenditure as shown, fairly reflects the transactions that have taken place in the bank accounts of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc. during the financial year ended 31st July 2007.

D. D. Wright C.P.A. (Auditor)

12/9/07

Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the Year Ended 31st July 2007

Publication Account – Investment Account

Receipts		Expenditure	
Sales:			
Eucalypts	26.00		0.00
Birds	36.45		
Spiders	78.00		
Tzaros –W/Life	90.00		
Weeds	5.00		
CD Box-Ironbark	50.00		
Mixed Books	467.45		
Orchids	42.00		
Postage	3.90		
Interest	1213.79	Surplus	2012.59
	2012.59		2012.59

Bank Balance at 1st August 2006		Bank Balance at 31st July 2007	
Cheque A/c	3423.07	Cheque A/c	5435.66
Term Deposit	15818.84	Term Deposit	15818.84
Term Deposit	6500.00	Term Deposit	6500.00
Term Deposit	13000.00	Term Deposit	13000.00
Surplus for year	2012.16		
	40754.50		40754.50

I have examined the documents and the records supporting the above statements of receipts and expenditure and I am able to report that in my opinion the receipts and expenditure as shown, fairly reflects the transactions that have taken place in the bank accounts of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc. during the financial year ended 31st July 2007.

D. D. Wright C. P. A.
Auditor.

Statement of Accounts and Expenditure for the Year Ended 31st July 2007

Meeting Hall account

Receipts		Expenditure	
Hall Hire	5535.00	City of Greater Bendigo	7940.00
Donations	1800.00	Hall Maintenance	2132.00
Interest	38.91		
	7373.91		10072.00
		Deficit	2698.09
			7373.91

Bank Balance at 1st August 2006		Bank Balance at 31st July 2007-09-02	
Cheque A/c	9815.69	Cheque A/c	7117.60
Deficit	2698.09		
	7117.60		7117.60

I have examined the documents and the records supporting the above statements of receipts and expenditure and I am able to report that in my opinion the receipts and expenditure as shown, fairly reflects the transactions that have taken place in the bank accounts of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc. during the financial year ended 31st July 2007.

D. D. Wright C. P. A.
Auditor.

12/9/07

Some interesting Bird Observations

by Glenise Moors

How this series of dry years has affected our birds! This year Fuscous Honeyeaters were absent from the Sedgwick bushland for many weeks during Winter. They are usually here year-round and often rear two broods. On the 5th of September I noticed that two Fuscous Honeyeaters had returned, along with several other species, and their numbers have increased until now the bush sounds more like a normal Spring.

On the 7th of September I observed a pair of White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes collecting spider webs from bushes and eucalypts on our bush block. They were beginning a nest high on a horizontal fork in a Red Box. Building only took place for one hour before midday each day. I returned on 24th of September to find they were still collecting spider web and small sticks. They certainly take a long time to build a nest!
This species have bred in our area for the past 20 years, at least, but I haven't been able to find a nest until now. The immature birds usually come with their parents to feed in the eucalypts around our house.
Glenise Moors

Biodiversity Quiz...and Answers

These questions were in the last Whirrakee, they, and the answers, are from the July 'Victoria Naturally' eBulletin.

Q1: The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council last week recommended the creation of five new national parks to save the Murray River's dying river red gum forests. Name one of the parks.
A1: Barmah National Park, Gunbower National Park, Lower Goulburn River National Park, Warby Range-Ovens River National Park or the Leaghur-Koorangie National Park.

Q2: Which ground-dwelling bird has been described as one of the hardest working birds in the world? The Malleefowl, the Bush Stone-Curlew or the Emu?
A2: The Malleefowl, which spend up to 300 days a year digging and maintaining nest mounds with their large and powerful feet.

Read more: Victorian Malleefowl Recovery Group: http://www.malleefowlvictoria.org.au/

Q3: The Macquarie Perch is described as a long-lived fish. Does it live up to 5, 10 or 20 years of age?
A3: The Macquarie Perch can live up to 20 years of age, although most fish are believed to be less than 10 years old. This longevity enables Australian native fish to deal with our harsh, variable environment, surviving over many years to capitalise on good years where conditions for spawning and recruitment are best.

Q4: Most of the firewood sold in Victoria is: a) Messmate b) Red Gum or c) made of building offcuts?
A4: Sadly, 80 per cent of firewood sold in Victoria is Red Gum, often taken from our extraordinary Red Gum forests such as the Barmah-Millewa.
Read more: Friends of the Earth
http://www.melbourne.foe.org.au/campaigns/barmah/firewood.htm

Q5: Why was September 7 chosen as Australia's National Threatened Species Day?
A5: National Threatened Species Day is held every year on September 7 to mark the death of Ben, the last known Tasmanian Tiger, who died on this day in Hobart Zoo in 1936.
Read more: National Museum of Canberra
http://www.jobs.nma.gov.au/media/media_releases_index/4_september_2003_tassie_tiger/

Project Hindmarsh celebrates 10 years of success
From the September 'Victoria Naturally' eBulletin. Thanks Stuart, for forwarding it to me.

A pioneering tree planting program near Nhill that has successfully linked Victoria's Big Desert and Little Desert National Park and last month celebrated its 10th anniversary should be used as a springboard for much larger nature conservation projects across the state, the Victoria Naturally alliance says.

"In Western Australia a project called Gondwana Link is restoring and reconnecting habitat from Margaret River on the coast all the way inland to Kalgoorlie," Victoria Naturally's Carrie Deutsch says.

"We need to take what we've learnt from Project Hindmarsh, an incredible conservation effort based out of Nhill that has involved more than 3000 volunteers, many from Melbourne, and a third of local farmers, and roll it out across the state on a much larger scale."

Read More: Planting seeds of hope
http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22223509-2862,00.html - Herald Sun

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and another biodiversity quiz...
also from the September 'Victoria Naturally' eBulletin

The answers will be in the next *Whirrakee.*

Q1: Victoria's Bass Strait is home to one of Australia's three largest feeding concentrations of which turtle, the Leatherback, the Leathery Turtle or the Trunkback?

Q2: Which deadly pathogen is devastating grass trees throughout Victoria - is it the ebola virus, armillaria root rot or phytopthera?

Q3: Can you name one of the two monotremes (egg-laying mammals) found around Melbourne?

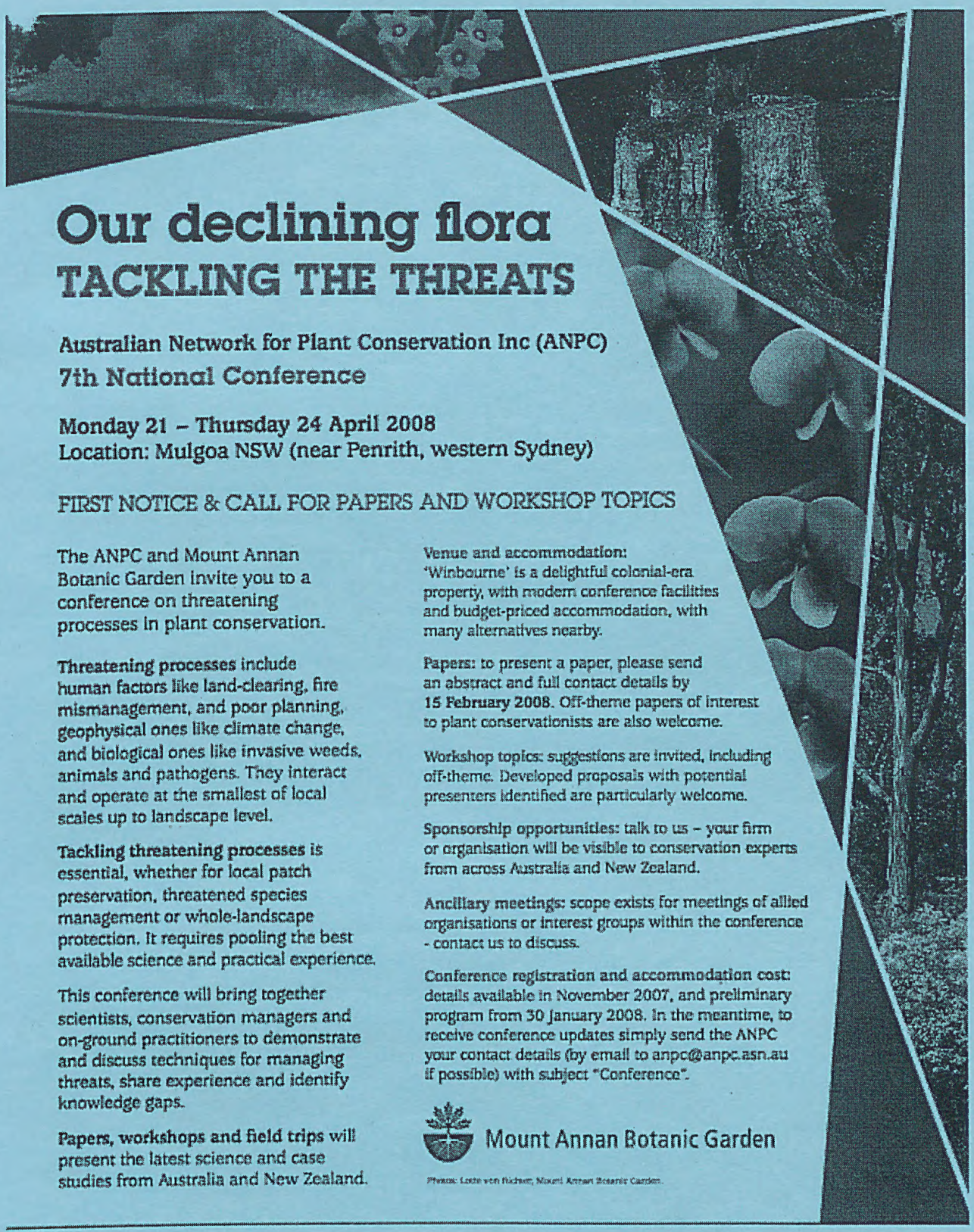
Q4: Seagrass meadows cover the seafloor in many of Victoria's bays and inlets. Are they classified as a seaweed (macroalgae) or are they true flowering plants (angiosperms)?

Q5: Also known as the Bush Thick-knee, some Indigenous peoples link this bird to ghosts because of its eerie call. Is it the Bush-Stone Curlew, Stubble Quail or the Grey-Crowned Babbler?

Friends of the Brisbane Ranges Annual Wildflower Show
On Sunday October 14th, the Friends of the Brisbane Ranges will be holding their annual Wildflower Show. This year the Friends have incorporated a photographic exhibition and sales showcasing photos of the Brisbane ranges flora, fauna, landscapes and buildings.

There will also be two bus tours to the fire affected area around Steiglitz. There will be a fantastic display of flowering grass trees and brilliant orchids that the Brisbane Ranges are famous for. Also incorporated into the tour will be a historical overview of the Steiglitz area. Bookings for the bus tours are essential. Seats are limited.

Details at http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fobr/



Our declining flora
TACKLING THE THREATS

Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc (ANPC)
7th National Conference

Monday 21 – Thursday 24 April 2008
Location: Mulgoa NSW (near Penrith, western Sydney)

FIRST NOTICE & CALL FOR PAPERS AND WORKSHOP TOPICS

The ANPC and Mount Annan Botanic Garden invite you to a conference on threatening processes in plant conservation.

Threatening processes include human factors like land-clearing, fire mismanagement, and poor planning, geophysical ones like climate change, and biological ones like invasive weeds, animals and pathogens. They interact and operate at the smallest of local scales up to landscape level.

Tackling threatening processes is essential, whether for local patch preservation, threatened species management or whole-landscape protection. It requires pooling the best available science and practical experience.

This conference will bring together scientists, conservation managers and on-ground practitioners to demonstrate and discuss techniques for managing threats, share experience and identify knowledge gaps.

Papers, workshops and field trips will present the latest science and case studies from Australia and New Zealand.

Venue and accommodation: 'Winbourne' is a delightful colonial-era property, with modern conference facilities and budget-priced accommodation, with many alternatives nearby.

Papers: to present a paper, please send an abstract and full contact details by **15 February 2008**. Off-theme papers of interest to plant conservationists are also welcome.

Workshop topics: suggestions are invited, including off-theme. Developed proposals with potential presenters identified are particularly welcome.

Sponsorship opportunities: talk to us – your firm or organisation will be visible to conservation experts from across Australia and New Zealand.

Ancillary meetings: scope exists for meetings of allied organisations or interest groups within the conference - contact us to discuss.

Conference registration and accommodation cost: details available in November 2007, and preliminary program from 30 January 2008. In the meantime, to receive conference updates simply send the ANPC your contact details (by email to anpc@anpc.asn.au if possible) with subject "Conference".

Mount Annan Botanic Garden

Photos: Lotte von Richter, Mount Annan Botanic Garden.

Australian Network for Plant Conservation, Inc
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Fax: 02 6250 9528
Email: anpc@anpc.asn.au
Website: http://www.anpc.asn.au

Diary

The General, Bird Observers Group and Fauna Study Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

General Meetings

Wednesday, October 10 7.30pm
Darren Perry will talk about 'Indigenous settlement and culture in the North-central region of Victoria'. Darren operates his own business as an Indigenous Cultural Heritage and Natural Resource Management Consultant and is based in Swan Hill.

Wednesday November 14 7.30pm
Simon Bonwick will talk about 'state prohibited weeds – the weed spotter program'. He is the Weed Alert Contact Officer at Seymour and a member of Victoria's Weed Alert Rapid Response Team.

Excursions

The next club excursion is on **October 13**. Please see page 3 for the latest update.
Contact Richard Goonan if you plan to attend or have any questions (ph 0423418815).

Fauna Group

This group meets (in the clubrooms) on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.

Wednesday, October 24 7.30pm
Topic of the night to be advised.

Fauna Excursions

Every Friday morning starting at around 9 to 9:30, the Fauna Group inspects nest boxes in the Spring Gully area. The excursions are led by Maurie Lewis, 16 Vains St. Golden Square. Phone 0407 427 179 or 5442 1813. Phone Maurie to confirm exact departure times and location. If you don't phone but go directly to Maurie's house and find nobody at the house between 9 and 9:30 then the excursion is not on.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.

W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.

Bus trip to Cranbourne Native Botanic Gardens – Sunday 21st October

See page 3 for details

Pomonal Native Flower Show and
Grampians Wildflower & Art Show
First weekend in October, see page 3 for details.

Friends of the Brisbane Ranges Annual Wildflower Show, October 14, see page 9.

SEANA Autumn campout 7 - 10 Mar 2008 Naracoorte Caves NP – 1st Notice

Attractions include Caves, rare fossils, viewing southern bent-winged bat wintering colony plus botany, bird and geology tours.
Registration and deposit of $30 to be paid by 20 September.
Total cost probably under $125 includes 3 catered dinners & caves guides.

Australian Naturalists Network (ANN) Get-together 10-18 May 2008

Mary River Park, Northern Territory.
Expression of interest & deposit of $200 to NTFNC by 1/10/07.
Accommodation at Mary River Park to be booked directly by end of October 07.

Anne Bridley (54493479) has further details

Garden Working Bee

The next morning of (pleasant) work will be on Saturday 6th October at 9am. All welcome